

learned yesterday that a second Obama official, Steve Ellis, who was the Deputy Director for the Agency under President Obama, said that this isn't a Republican or Democratic issue; it is about the letter she sent.

He went on to say:

The administration's got some great initiatives and their agenda for public lands is good, but you need the career employees to implement your agenda successfully across the West. Your leader has got to be respected by career employees and across the landscape, in both blue and red states."

We know, sadly, this isn't the case.

I am here today to urge my colleagues to wait to move forward with this nomination of Ms. Stone-Manning and allow debate to continue at the committee level. We had very spirited debate last week.

One important note that I want to make here before wrapping is that this is not just an issue for the West. Ms. Stone-Manning's conduct should cause alarm to not only Senators who represent Bureau of Land Management States but every State with a logging industry.

Stone-Manning's refusal to come forward for 4 years placed the safety of loggers in jeopardy, which is offensive to loggers across our country, from the loggers in Maine, which is the most forested State in the Nation; to loggers in State likes New Hampshire, Georgia; to the forestry, wildlife, and logging groups like Meadow River Hardwood Lumber Company, the Houston Safari Club, the Idaho Logging Council, who withdrew their support or have come out in opposition.

Ms. Stone-Manning's actions matter and should not be accepted by any Senator. Montanans and all Americans deserve to hear directly from her, from Ms. Stone-Manning, about why she obstructed a Federal investigation for 4 years and why she has yet to show any remorse.

I think it is also important for my colleagues across the aisle who admitted they don't know anything about the nominee—we heard that in the committee hearing last week—or haven't spoken with her to have the opportunity to learn more as well.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, my wife and I received our COVID vaccinations, and we were grateful to the scientists, the doctors, the nurses, and everyone else who made those miracle medicines possible.

It is a relief to see vaccination numbers in this country picking up a little bit in the last few days after declining for months.

It is a relief to hear some of the loudest anti-vax quacks change their tune about the importance of getting vaccinated. While many of these charlatans and blowhards were dreaming up bizarre theories about the vaccines, the virus was not idle. In fact, months of

confusion and quackery have given the virus a chance to mutate and, sadly, to again regain the upper hand.

This mutation, known as the Delta variant, is now in every State in the Union. COVID infections, hospitalizations, and deaths are on the rise again. Almost all—almost all—of those who are hospitalized and facing serious illness and even death are unvaccinated. We know that.

But this is a virus the world has never seen before, and the science is still evolving. What scientists don't know yet is whether people who are vaccinated against COVID can spread the Delta variant even if they experience few symptoms.

While unvaccinated people should wear a mask whenever out in public, the CDC is recommending that vaccinated people who live in high-transmission areas also wear masks in indoor public spaces for now. Further, vaccinated people who have vulnerable individuals in their households—young children or those who are immunocompromised—should wear masks in public places. And finally, the CDC is recommending universal masking for all teachers, staff members, and students in school, regardless of vaccination status.

No one—no one—wants to wear a face mask. We all hoped that those days were all behind us. But I am bringing this mask with me in my pocket to be ready to use it when needed; others should do the same.

If you want to protect yourself, your family, and your community, get the jab. It is free and safe. Until then, wear the mask when you must.

REMEMBERING MIKE ENZI

Mr. President, on another topic, I am saddened today to learn of the death of our former colleague Mike Enzi.

Mike Enzi was my friend. We were elected to the Senate the same year. Nearly a year and a half of pandemic losses has reminded us all that life is fragile and fleeting. Even so, Mike Enzi's sudden passing has left many of us stunned.

It was less than 8 months ago when Mike came up to me on the floor and bid me farewell, as he entered his retirement.

As I said, we were elected to the Senate in the same year. He was a staunch conservative Wyoming Republican. I am a proud Democrat. But over the years, we found grounds for friendship. We disagreed on a lot of issues, but we respected one another, and we trusted one another.

Trust in another's character and motives sometimes seems to be in a dwindling supply in this Chamber, but it is essential for the Senate to function. Mike Enzi of Wyoming knew that. He was willing to reach across the aisle and look for partners.

The most unlikely political alliance I could think of was Mike Enzi cochairing a committee with Senator Ted Kennedy, of all people, on education. Several years ago, he even

reached across the aisle to ask me to join him in a legislative effort. It was one that I was aware of. Byron Dorgan of North Dakota had been one of the early authors of this legislation. It was basically designed to help small businesses and Main Street America have a fighting chance in the age of Amazon.

Over the years, we had seen too many mom-and-pop stores and other small businesses crushed by competition from online retail giants, in part because of an unfair advantage. Unlike brick-and-mortar merchants, online-only retailers didn't have to pay State and local sales taxes. That is unfair, and it created an advantage for the online marketers over the small businesses on Main Street. Communities and States had a harder time paying for schools, police protection, and other vital services as more sales shifted to online and sales tax revenue fell.

As a former mayor and retailer, owning a shoestore, Mike Enzi understood well how the unfair taxing system hurt brick-and-mortar retailers, and it also hurt State and local governments and their taxpayers. He had a solution, called the Marketplace Fairness Act, to apply the same sales tax rules to all retailers—simple, basic fairness. He asked me if I would be his Democratic partner in this effort. I agreed.

Our bill passed the Senate in the year 2013. Later, a Supreme Court decision clarifying that State and local governments have the authority to collect online sales tax made our bill unnecessary. But during the time we worked together, Mike Enzi was a good partner. He practiced what he called the 80 percent tool. He spoke about that tool, as he called it, in his farewell remarks here on the floor of the Senate. He said that we are "all looking to make our communities and country a better place. We might not always agree on what the solutions are, but we can respect each other for working to find one."

He went on to say:

The 80 percent tool is where all of our energy, attention, and talents should be focused. If we just worked on the 20 percent that we don't agree on, and will never agree on, we will only generate headlines about how hard we are working, and nothing actually getting done—just gridlock.

Relying on his 80 percent tool enabled Mike Enzi to work with Ted Kennedy to reauthorize Head Start Programs for preschoolers and tuition assistance programs for college students. He loved his State. He loved the Senate. He loved America.

Mike Enzi and his wife Diana were an amazing partnership, too, for over 50 years—three children and many grandchildren.

Loretta and I send our condolences to Diana. Mike was a wonderful friend and colleague in the U.S. Senate, and he will be missed.

SIMONE BILES

Mr. President, on an unrelated topic, over this past week, the Olympics have been an inspiring display of global unity and friendly competition.